Landforms of the United States
Physical geography is the study of the landforms and bodies of water of the Earth. The United States encompasses 3,537,441 square miles and has some spectacular landforms. In this presentation you will learn about and create a map of some of these landforms and bodies of water.
Get Ready to Explore!

You will need:
- A blank map of the United States
- Map pencils/ Crayons
- Blue, yellow, red
- orange, green, brown
Which Way?

We use a **compass rose** on a map to find and show direction. Please draw and label a compass rose in the top, right corner of your map. Examples are given below.
Our Neighbors

The United States is located on the North American Continent. Sharing the continent with us are the countries of Canada and Mexico. To our north is Canada and to our south is Mexico. On your map, label Canada and color it yellow. Label Mexico and color it red.
Bodies of Water

• Ocean
• Gulf
• Lake
• River
Oceans

About \( \frac{3}{4} \)'s of the Earth’s surface is covered by a large body of salt water. We have divided this body of water into 7 different oceans. Two of these oceans border the United States. The **Atlantic Ocean** is to the **east** of the United States and the **Pacific Ocean** is to the **west**. Label each ocean on your map and color them **blue**.
Canada
Mexico
Pacific Ocean
Atlantic Ocean
Gulf

A gulf is a large area of ocean partly surrounded by land. The United States has one large gulf off the coast of Texas called the **Gulf of Mexico**. Find it on your map and label it.
A lake is a large body of water surrounded by land. Lakes are usually freshwater. The largest lakes in the United States are the Great Lakes. They form part of the border with Canada. Label the five Great Lakes on your map and color them blue.
Great Lakes contain 20% world’s fresh water!
A river is a large stream of water that flows into a larger body of water. Some significant rivers in the United States are shown on the map below. Use **blue** to draw and **label** the Colorado, Rio Grande, and Mississippi Rivers on your map.
Mighty Mississippi

The Mississippi is about 2552 miles long which is 4107 kilometres long, and it ends up in the Gulf Of Mexico.
Landforms

- Island
- Peninsula
- Mountain range
- Plain
- Valley
Island
An island is a body of land completely surrounded by water. The largest island in the United States is the big island of Hawaii, our 49th state. A satellite view of the Big Island is shown below. Hawaii is an inset on your map. Label it.
Hawaii

Only growing state in the USA

The Big Island (Hawaii Island) is getting bigger by about 42 acres each year because of the continuous eruption of the Kīlauea Volcano. It is the most active volcano on Earth and it's been erupting for more than 30 years. The Hawaiian name 'Kilauea' means "spewing" or "much spreading".
Peninsula

A peninsula is landed surrounded on three sides of water. The best known peninsula in the United States is Florida. However, the largest peninsula in the United States is actually the state of Alaska. Label the Alaskan peninsula on your map.
Mountain Range
A mountain is a part of land that abruptly rises to at least 1,000 feet. A mountain range is a group or chain of mountains. The map on the next slide shows some important North American mountain ranges. Locate the 2 ranges in BOLD PRINT and label them.

• Rocky Mountains
• Appalachians
• Cascades
• Sierra Nevadas
• Coast Range
• Alaska Range
Canyon

A canyon is a deep gorge, typically one with a river flowing through it. The largest Canyon in the United States is The Grand Canyon. It is located in Arizona. The Colorado River runs through the Grand Canyon.
Mrs. Lowe’s Pics of The Grand Canyon
Label the Grand Canyon and Colorado River on your map.
Plain

A plain is a large area of flat or gently rolling land. The United States has two major plains. In the center of the country are the Great Plains. Along the eastern coast and extending along the Gulf Coast are the Coastal Plains. Label the GREAT PLAINS on your map.